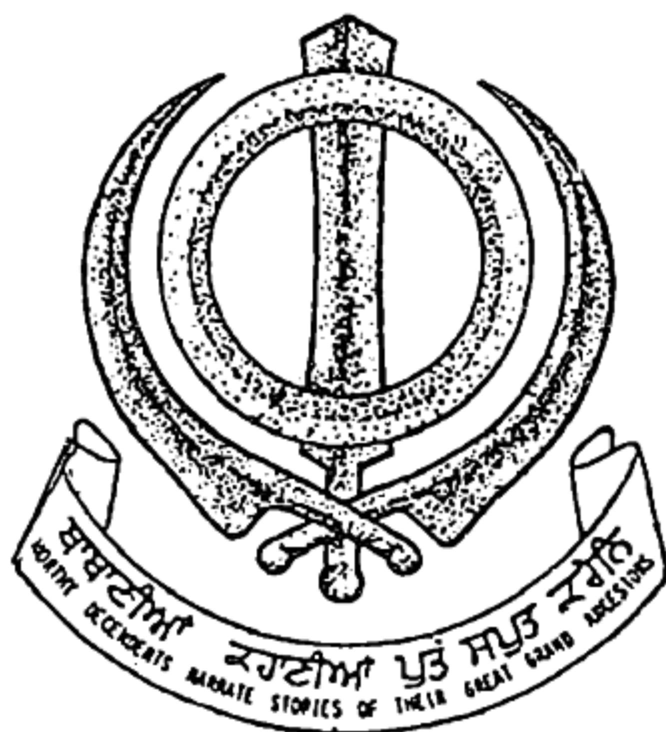

॥ ੧ੳ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ ॥
(God is one, all glory to Him)


Defender of Religious Freedom:

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

(1621- 1675)

Gurmukh Singh OBE (UK)



Publication No 16

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ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਯੂ.ਕੇ.

The National Sikh Resource Centre

8-10 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx, UB2 5AA

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Message from the Hon General Secretary

(1) *Life & the Unique Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur* (for mature students and readers)
(2) *Defender of Religious Freedom: Guru Tegh Bahadur*

For some years, the Sikh Missionary Society UK had felt the need for a well-researched publication about the life and unique martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji.

Earlier publications have been influenced either by Brahmanical thought or are biased against Guru ji's life mission and the noble cause which he pursued to the end. For example, historians of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) of India, have relied on highly biased and even hostile non-Sikh sources.

However, in recent years, much more reliable contemporary sources like the ancient family records kept by Bhatt poets and Panda genealogists have been made available by research scholars.

The Society is grateful to Sardar Gurmukh Singh OBE for undertaking this project. His background as a retired Principal Civil Servant (UK) and a renowned journalist and interpreter of Sikh ideology made him eminently suitable for this task. He has undertaken a comprehensive study of various sources and produced two publications as above.

I commend the publication in hand to readers while thanking the Sangats for their continued generous support of the Society's missionary work.

Teja Singh Manget
Hon. Gen Secretary
The Sikh Missionary Society UK
March 2017

The account which follows is that of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Nanak IX. His martyrdom was a momentous and unique event. Never, in the annals of human history had the leader of one religion given his life for the religious freedom of others.

Tegh Bahadur's deed [martyrdom] was unique
(Guru Gobind Singh, *Bachittar Natak.*)

A martyrdom to stabilize the world
(Bhai Gurdas Singh II) *Vaar* 41 *Pauri* 23)

*****

Dedicated to Mata Gujri ji, wife of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Nanak IX.

*****

Sikh belief in One Guru *Jote* (divine Light)

Guru Nanak Dev (1469 -1539) was the founder of *Sikhism*. The Sikhs themselves prefer to describe the Sikh way of life as *Sikhi.*

The Sikh belief is that Guru Nanak received divine knowledge (enlightenment) directly from the Supreme Timeless Being. That the same *Jote* (divine Light) of Guru Nanak passed through a succession of nine other Guru-persons and now resides in the Sikh holy Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, venerated as the Living Guru of the Sikhs.

Therefore, the *Guru*, meaning the Giver of Knowledge or the Dispeller of Darkness, is a singular concept for the Sikhs.

In order to stress this *Sikhi* concept of *One Guru Jote*, the Guru-persons are referred to as Nanak, Nanak II, Nanak III and so on to Nanak X.

The stress is on One Guru, one *Sikhi* mission, one world-view with one vision of an egalitarian world order in which no one inflicts pain on another. That is the vision of a *halemi raj,*[1] an expression used by Guru Arjan Dev, Nanak V, the first Guru martyr.

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[1]This is reference to the ideal regime based on justice and which looks after the well-being of all. A state in which all feel comfortable and secure. SGGS p74.

Introduction

In Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Sikhs have a most remarkable story to tell the world torn apart by religious conflict. It is the story of a great saint-martyr who gave his life for the religious freedom of all. He was witness to the end, to the founding belief of Guru Nanak's egalitarian ideology: that all have the fundamental human right to own chosen religious path to seek the Ultimate Reality described by numerous Names.

His was a protest through his supreme sacrifice against religious fanaticism and forced conversions to another religion. It was in that sense that in the history of great martyrdoms for worthy causes, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom was described as unique by Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X.

The main reason for this publication is that earlier publications about the life and martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, either do scant justice to the Guru's active life, or have been written more like fiction in the traditional *saakhi* (story-telling) style. Many writers have not taken too much trouble to cross-check even some important events and dates.

One serious consequence is distortion of Sikh history in educational textbooks approved by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) of India. Such distortion of Sikh history in text books requires research-based response. That has been my main objective as I have collated evidence about the life and unique martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur. I am convinced that here we have, at leothast, the start of a serious study of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji's life and martyrdom –

otherwise much distorted by *parcharaks* (traditional preachers) and Indian NCERT historians alike.

So, the main reason for this simpler version of a more comprehensive study, "*Life and the Unique Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur*", is to produce a factual account for students and average readers.

This is my labour of love for the Great Guru who laid the foundation for the final chapter in Guru Nanak's mission: the revelation of the *Khalsa Akal Purakh ki Fauj* (*Khalsa*, the Army of the Timeless Being).

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa
Waheguru ji ki Fateh!

Gurmukh Singh OBE
Sewauk2005@yahoo.co.uk
March 2017
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Links about the author, Sardar Gurmukh Singh OBE:

http://www.sikhmissionarysociety.org/sms/smsarticles/advisorypanel/gurmukhsinghsewauk/gurmukhsingh.html
https://www.sikhnet.com/authors/gurmukh-singh-obe-uk

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Early life

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675), was the ninth Guru[2] of the Sikhs. He was born on 1 April, 1621. His mother's name was *Mata*[3] Nanaki the daughter of Hari Chand and Hardevi living in the village Bakala. He was the youngest son Guru Hargobind, Nanak VI, (1595-1644). He also had one older sister. The place where he was born is called *Guru ke Mahal* in the Guru Bazaar street in Amritsar, Punjab, India.

He was named Tyag Mall at birth and he was later given the name *Tegh Bahadur* (the fearless master of the sword) by his father due to his exceptional bravery in the battle of Kartarpur in April 1635. This was the last of Guru Hargobind's four defensive battles when attacked by local Mughal rulers under various excuses.

He was married on 4 February, 1633 to Gujri (1624-1705), daughter of Lal Chand Subhikkhi and Bishan Kaur who were living at Kartarpur, in the Jalandhar district. Their family village was Lakhnaur near Amballa.

Guru Hargobind decided to settle down at Kiratpur in the Himalayan Shivalik hills with his household from May 1635. Tegh Bahadur was 14 years old by now and stayed there with his Guru-father till the latter's demise on 3 March 1644. His father taught him the deeper *miri-piri* (temporal-spiritual) message of Gurbani in

[2]To understand the Guru family relationships in this account, the reader is advised to continually refer to the Guru family tree at the Annex.
[3]*Mata'* is a term of respect for elderly ladies and is also used by the Sikhs for the wife or mother of a Guru. Similarly, *Bibi* is a term of respect for women and can be variously used for mother, sister, daughter or daugher-in-law.

Adi Granth[4] This was a period of nine years of participation and service in *Guru-darbar* (*Guru's court*) and Tegh Bahadur had first-hand experience of the affairs of Guruship in his father's company. Sikh *sangats* (congregations) from different parts of the country and beyond, visited Guru Hargobind at Kiratpur. He also accompanied his father on some preaching tours in the regions north and west of Delhi including Haryana and adjoining parts of Rajasthan.

Guru Hargobind, about whom Bhai Gurdas wrote, "The warrior Guru, the vanquisher of armies, but his heart is full of love and charity", passed the Guruship to Har Rai, his grandson, the younger son of Baba Gurditta, before his demise on 3 March 1644.

Before his departure from this world, Guru Hargobind also instructed Tegh Bahadur, who was then 23 years old, of his great mission ahead. While carrying out his responsibility towards the Guru family at Kiratpur, he was asked to take his mother, *Mata* Nanaki, and his wife, Gujri, to go and live at Bakala. His maternal grandparents (*nana* and *nani*), Hari Chand and Hari Devi lived at Bakala. Tegh Bahadur was also to receive the income from Guru Hargobind's land at the new town of Sri Hargobindpur.

Baba[5]Tegh Bahadur, as he was then addressed with respect, arrived at Bakala on 3 March, 1644. For the next 20 years, fulfilling this mission, he remained constantly available to serve Guru Nanak's

[4]The "First Scripture" compiled by Nanak V, Guru Arjan, in 1604. Later, Nanak X, Guru Gobind Singh, included *Shabads* (holy hymns) by Guru Tegh Bahadur and in 1708, and passed on the Gurship to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the perpetual Guru of the Sikhs.
[5]*Baba* is a term of respect generally used for grand-father, male members of that or earlier generations, and holy men. A son of a Guru is called *baba* regardless of age. Therefore, to avoid confsionusion,it should be understood that he was known as *Baba* Tegh Bahadur before his Guruship in 1664.

Jote (Light) residing in the successors of Guru Hargobind: his grandson, Guru Har Rai, Guruship 1644-1661, and next, his grandson and Guru Har Rai's younger son, Guru Har Krishan, Guruship 1661-1664. From time to time, Baba Tegh Bahadur visited Kiratpur, the family base.

He made Bakala his base while he also spent many years on long preaching tours, especially from 1656, as requested by Nanak VII, Guru Har Rai (otherwise, his nephew by relationship). His choice was for a simple life, inclined towards solitude; yet he was active as a householder and preacher of Guru Nanak's mission.

He had numerous visitors from *sangats* (Sikh congregations) in India and abroad e.g. from places like Kabul, who came to meet the *sant saroop* (saintly) son of the great saint-warrior Guru Hargobind. He sat in local *sangats* and recited *Gurbani*. Sikh sources confirm an unobtrusive but active life during this period, otherwise much misrepresented even by some Sikh preachers portraying Tegh Bahadur as some sort of recluse or ascetic in the Brahmanic tradition.

***Parchaar* (preaching) tours**

Early in 1656, Guru Har Rai delegated the responsibility for the propagation of *Sikhi* (Sikhism) in Malwa, Haryana and north-eastern parts of the Indian subcontinent to Baba Tegh Bahadur. Accordingly, until his martyrdom in 1675, he undertook preaching tours accompanied by prominent Sikhs and their families. These tours were the most extensive after Guru Nanak Sahib, covering vast tracts of countryside. The group travelled in the form of a *vaheer* which implies a large group of men, women and children moving along like

a caravan with carts, luggage and animals with armed guards.

The first tour began on 13 June 1656 and the *vaheer* visited and stayed at places like Kurukashetra Hardwar, Mathura, Prayagraj, Banaras, Sasram and reached Patna. This city became the Guru family base for many years. Evidence of Sakhi number 14 in *Guru Kian Sakhian* is relevant in connection with this prolonged tour:
"Sri Tegh Bahadur ji, at the age of 35 years, on the day of Samat 1713 [1656 CE] *Asad Sudi Ekam started his tirath yatra (pilgrimage) from Kot Guru Har Rai. When Sri Guru Har Rai ji passed away he* [Tegh Bahadur] *with family was in Patna. Here on Samat 1718 Pokh Massay Sudi Saptmi on Wednesday Gobind Das was born. Being far away from Punjab he did not get the news of the demise of Guru Har Rai ji sooner. For that reason he came to Delhi and then Punjab in 1721 to condole the family."*

A rough conversion of the *Bikrami* (Indian calendar) years mentioned above gives year 1656 CE as the year when Tegh Bahadur started the tour of north-eastern Indian subcontinent, year 1661 as the year of birth of Gobind Das (Guru Gobind Singh) and year 1664 as the year when he returned to Punjab via Delhi. Late Prof. Piara Singh Padam confirms[6] that this was a prolonged tour and Gobind Das (later Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X) was born during the later part of this tour at Patna on Poh Sudi Saptmi in year 1718 Bikrami. That gives Guru Gobind Singh's date of birth as 18 December 1661.

Tegh Bahadur was following in the footsteps of Guru Nanak and taking the universal message of the Guru to distant places and

[6]Piara Singh Padam, *Tegh Bahadur Simariyay* (Punjabi) pp 26-27

to *Sangats* (holy congregations as Sikh centres) all over Northern India. It is not surprising that even before he took over the responsibilities of Guruship, the Mughal rulers were becoming greatly concerned about his movements. In view of other revolts around the country, the question uppermost in the mind of the Mughal administration would have been if he too was starting some sort of a rebellion against the empire.

When the news of Guru Har Rai's demise on 6 October, 1661 reached Baba Tegh Bahadur, the group headed back towards Punjab towards end 1663. On the way, he heard that Guru Har Krishan and his older brother, Baba Ram Rai, had been invited to Delhi by emperor Aurungzeb. He returned to Punjab via Delhi after meeting them on 21 March 1664. Guru Har Krishan and Baba Ram Rai met the emperor on 25 March, 1664. The latter was much touched by *Bala* (child) Guru and expressed a desire to see him again.

However, in Waheguru's *Hukam* (will), Guru Har Krishan passed away a few days later on 30 March, 1664. A day before his demise, he consecrated his "*Baba who lived at the village Bakala*" as the next Guru. As a result, exploiting the confusion, all in all, twenty-two pretenders to Guruship, mostly related to each other being the descendants of the Gurus, turned up at the village Bakala. They set up own camps, each claiming to be the next Guru on Guru Nanak's *Gurgaddi* (throne). Foremost amongst these was Baba Dhir Mall, a grandson of Guru Hargobind.

Word about the demise of Guru Har Krishan spread. In due course[7],

[7]Space would not allow a fuller discussion of the many reasons for the delay in conducting the Guruship ceremony by the delegation from Delhi. Suffice to say that these related to the last rites and the domestic and political circumstances. Nevertheless, the delay would have added to the confusion. about the next True Guru.

led by Mata Sulakhni (Guru Harkishan's mother) the ceremony of passing over of the Guruship to *Guru* Tegh Bahagur was conducted by a group of prominent Sikhs on 11 August 1664 at Bakala. Despite this ceremony, the claimants to Guruship, having got used to receiving donations and egged on by their *masands* (ministers) remained unconvinced and the situation was not resolved

Role of Makhan Shah Lubhana

Any remaining doubt about the *True Guru* was settled by a wealthy and prominent Sikh trader, Makhan Shah Lubhana, who arrived at Bakala with his family (his wife and two sons) and attendants. According to Sikh tradition, when his cargo vessel got into difficulties at sea, he meditated on Guru Nanak's Guru *Jote* for support and also vowed to donate 500 *mohar* (gold pieces) to the Guru.

His prayer was answered. The vessel was saved. Makhan Shah took 500 *mohar* with him and set out to see the Guru on the *Gurgaddi* of Guru Nanak to fulfil his pledge. As guided by the Sikhs on the way, he reached the village of Bakala on the Divali festival which was on 9 October 1664[8]. Makhan Shah was looking for the true *Baba at Bakala* and was referred to the twenty-two claimants of that title! Amongst these was the leading claimant, Dhir Mall, backed by his *masand* (minister), Shihan.

Not knowing who the True Guru (Nanak IX) was, Makhan Shah thought that the Guru would be the *antarjami* (thought reader) and would ask for the exact donation amount. So, he started going around placing 2 *mohar* and bowing before each of the claimants to

Guruship. Finally, when told that there was yet another member of the Guru family who lived in isolation and remained in meditation, he came to Guru Tegh Bahadur. He bowed and placed 2 *mohar* before the *True* Guru.

The Guru opened his eyes, smiled and asked Makhan Shah, "What about the rest of the 500 *mohar* you promised?" Makhan Shah, hardly able to contain his joy, placed the remaining amount before the Guru, bowed, went out and shouted from the rooftop that he had found the True Guru – "*Gur laadho re*!" Thenceforth, sangats (congregations) came from far and wide to pay their respects to Guru Tegh Bahadur. After some initial strong opposition, even Baba Dhir Mall became reconciled to the position.

First Preaching Tour after Guruship

On 22 November, 1664, Makhan Shah accompanied the Guru to Harmandar Sahib at Amritsar. However, the *pujari* (custodians) did not allow entry[9]. Guru Tegh Bahadur refused Makhan Shah's request to enter by force and for a short while stayed towards the north of the Harmandar Sahib complex where the location is commemorated as Gurdwara Tthada Sahib.

Accompanied by many Sikhs including Makhan Shah and his family, the Guru accepted a request from Bibi Harro of village Valla located a few miles west of Amritsar, to camp at her village.

[9]The holy site was under the control of Harji, son of Manohar Das also known as Meharwan, the son of Prithi Chand, the elder son of Guru Ramdas, Nanak IV. The internal conflict about Guruship started with Prithi Chand who felt that by right Guruship after Guru Ramdas belonged to him and not his younger brother Guru Arjan.

Descendants of Bibi Haro still live in the village[10]. Realising their mistake and probably due to the loss of the generous donation they would have received from wealthy Sikhs like Makhan Shah, the priests of Harmandar Sahib, Amritsar, came to seek the Guru's forgiveness.

From village Valla the Guru toured and preached at the main Sikh centres (along the old Mughal Grand Trunk (GT) Road including Tarn Taran, Khadur Sahib and Goindwal Sahib and proceeded through places like Khemkaran and Sultanpur towards the Malwa countryside. Heading south the Guru passed through towns and villages such as Zira, Moga, Darauli and the Lakhi jungle (Bathinda and Faridkot districts) and reached Sabo Talwandi (Damdama Sahib) where the group stayed for about 15 days and dug a *sarowar* (holy pool).

From there, at the request of a prominent Sikh Bhai Daggo the Guru went to Dhamtan in Haryana. Bhai Daggo was keen to make Dhamtan a centre of Sikhi[11]. Vaisakhi gathering was held here and hundreds from surrounding areas came to see the Guru and his Sikhs. From here the group visited places like Kharak, Khatkar,Tek and Kaithal and Kurkhetar (Thanesar)[12]. He preached against the use of tobacco to which the local people were addicted.

At Dhamtan, the Guru received news of the death in April that year of Raja Dip Chand, son of Raja Tara Chand of Bilaspur Kiratpur

[10]Sikh chronicles record the names of many prominent women in Sikh history who played important and extrovert social roles in the local communities. Some, during the Guru period and later, rose to great prominence.
[11]Sakhi 33 of "MalwaDeshRatan" and Sakhi 20 of "Guru Kian Sakhian".
[12]Guru Tegh Bahadur toured Malwa three times to 1673. This probably was the reason why Guru Gobind Singh had maximum support from the Malwa villages when he was being pursued by the Mughal army on leaving the fort of Anandpur in late 1705. Through the efficient news gathering system of the Mughal administration, news of the preaching tours of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the countryside were reaching the area administrators and the bigoted Emperor Aurungzeb at Delhi.

was in this hill state). At the request of the Raja's widowed wife, Rani Champa, the Guru decided to visit the family at Bilaspur to condole with her. He reached Kiratpur on 6 May 1665. Makhan Shah Lubhana bade farewell to the Guru soon after reaching Kiratpur on 6 May, 1665. Guru ji set forth for Bilaspur within a few days on 13 May, with his mother, Mata Nanaki, late Guru Har Rai's wife Mata Sulakhni and many prominent Sikhs.

The Rani expressed a desire that the Guru should not leave Kiratpur area in Shivalik hills (which was in her state). The Guru accepted her request and bought some land close to Kiratpur to lay the foundation of the village of Chakk Nanaki on the mound of Makhowal on 19 June, 1665 (now called Anandpur Sahib).

Tour of north-eastern India (October 1665 to end 1670)

Guru Tegh Bahadur had returned to Punjab from his tour of Eastern Indian on hearing of the demise of Guru Har Rai (6 October, 1661). At about this time i.e. towards mid-1665, prominent Sikhs from Patna and Dhaka came to see Guru ji and invited him to visit the Sikh congregations in those areas again. Such preaching tours revived the links of the people with the Guru and strengthened Sikh organisation and networking.

The Guru accepted the request and set out with his family and prominent Sikh preachers in October 1665. Following the regal *miri-piri* (temporal-spiritual) lifestyle of the Gurus since Guru Hargobind,the *vaheer* included his wife, Gujri[13], and Sikhs like

[13]Given the clarification required about the exact date of birth of Gobind Das (later Guru Gobind Singh), it is a question for future research if Mata Gujri was already at Patna at this time. Patna had already become the Guru's family base for some years

Matti Das, Satti Das, Dial Das, Gawal Das, Gurdas, Sangat and Jettha and ohers. There is little doubt that he also had strong armed defence force for the security of his family and Sikhs, luggage, carts and animals.

The *vaheer* went through Ropar, and many villages to reach the town of Saifabad (now Bahadur Garh) a few miles from Patiala, named after a Muslim nobleman devotee of the Guru, Nawab Saif Khan. He was related to the Emperor Shah Jahan. He presented a fine horse to the Guru which was named *Sri Dhar* by the Sikhs.

From Saifabad, the Guru reached Dhamtan passing through Sunam, Shajli and Lehragaga. Dhamtan had become an important Sikh centre due to the Guru's preaching visit about 6 months earlier. Once again hundreds of devotees came to see the Guru during the Divali festival.

Reports of the Guru's movements and his popularity as a religious leader preaching the universal message of Sikh teachings were reaching Emperor Aurungzeb. On hearing of this second visit to Dhamtan and the large gathering of the countryside people flocking to the Guru, Aurungzeb ordered his detention.

The Guru and his Sikhs were arrested on 8 November 1665. Raja Jai Singh of Amber and his son Raja Ram Singh had close relations with the Mughals and they were also devotees of the *Guru-ghar* (Guru Nanak's House). On their request, the emperor placed Guru ji under the care of Raja Ram Singh on 13 December 1665.

Preaching tour from Delhi (16 December, 1665)

However, within three days, on 16 December, the Raja released Guru ji to resume his preaching tour towards eastern parts of the Indian sub-continent. It should be noted that officially the Guru had not been released and was still under detention and in the care of Raja Ram Singh by royal order.

The Guru and his leading Sikhs headed towards north-eastern parts of the Indian sub-continent. He selected his destinations so that established congregations of Guru Nanak in the towns and villages were visited and revived. Reports of such preaching activities empowering the ordinary people against oppressive rule, were bound to reach the Emperor.

Leading Sikhs with the Guru's entourage covered large tracts around the main centres where the Guru's *vaheer* stopped for many days and weeks and preached to the people. For example, according to the *Bhat Vahi Jadobansian*, Matti Das and Satti Das were preaching at Hardwar by 21 April, 1666. The Guru's main group visited Mathura, Agra, Itawa along river Jamna, Kanpur along river Ganga, Fatehpur, Ilahabad, Mirzapur, Banaras, Bodh Gaya (Bihar) and crossed the *Karamnash* river.

Guru ji took a bath in this river defying the Brahmanic superstition that a bath in the river destroyed the accumulated credit of a person's good deeds! It is clear that the Guru preached against Hindu ritualism and Brahmanic practices. That is also relevant in the context of his martyrdom in 1675, for a belief system, he did not subscribe to. In fact, his message to the masses was in line with Guru Nanak's condemnation of Brahmanic caste system and ritualism.

The *vaheer* reached Patna along the River Ganges in May 1666. From all accounts Patna had already become a centre for the Guru's mission for some years by this time. Mata Gurjri and the family settled here for many years since the earlier tour which started in mid-1656. Many accounts in the Sikh tradition, including the birth and early childhood of Guru Gobind Singh, are centred around this city.

From here, accepting the invitation of some leading Sikhs of Dhaka, Guru ji left the family at Patna and proceeded with other leading Sikh preachers towards Dhaka. He stopped at places like Bhagalpur, Sahibganj, and Raj Mahal, Malda and Pabna. Malda was a centre of Sufism. He stayed here for about a month and the Sufis discussed Sikh ideology with him. Next Murishdabad and on to Dhaka towards the middle of 1667, a Sikh centre linked to Punjab through Sikh traders at the time. From Dhaka, the Guru visited Chittagong, Comilla and Sylhet.

Later in 1668, Raja Ram Singh caught up with the Guru to seek his support. As ordered by Aurungzeb on 6 January 1668, the Raja was on a military expedition to subdue the Ahom people of Assam. The raja sought Guru ji's support for two reason. Firstly, Guru Nanak Dev ji was revered in these parts after his preaching tour which established *sangats* (congregations) in many towns. Secondly, the raja's superstitious troops feared the black magic and occult practices for which the local inhabitants were known. Guru ji's presence assured them that they were protected against such practices. He agreed to accompany the Raja on such a prolonged and perilous expedition instead of returning immediately to Patna.

Accompanied by Guru Ji, the Raja crossed river Brahmaputra towards the end of 1668 to reach Dhubri visited by Guru Nanak. He stopped at Rangamati and his army went on to surround Gohati. However, Guru ji was able to negotiate peace between the two sides before further bloodshed. Both sides rejoiced and built a mound called *Teghpur* or *Tegh Parbat* to commemorate the peace treaty.

Raja Ram Rai of Gaoripur in eastern Bengal came for the *darshan* (holy sight) of the Guru. At his request the Guru prayed for the fulfilment of his wish for a son. The prayer was answered and many years later, his son, Raja Ratan Rai came to Anandpur with his mother Rani Swaranmati to see Guru Gobind Singh. He brought many presents including a rare and trained elephant which was named "Parsaadi Haathi", and a Five-in-one multiple-use weapon.

Another year had passed and by the end of 1669, the Guru, who had been getting reports of Aurungzeb's religious persecution, decided to return to Punjab via Delhi. Raja Ram Singh stayed on with his army to ensure continued stability in the region.

On the way, Guru ji was brought under guard from Agra to Delhi to be released later through the intercession of the Guru's Muslim disciple Saif Khan, who was related to Aurungzeb. It took him two months and thirteen days to get the earlier royal order for Guru ji's detention under the care of Raja Ram Singh, to be withdrawn by the Emperor.

Meanwhile, the family group which started from Patna sometime after Guru ji left, reached Lakhnaur by 13 September, 1670, after stops at Ayudhia, Lakhnow, Nanamata, Hardwar, Pehova (in Haryana) and Kurukshetra. Mata Gujri's elder brother, Mehar

Chand lived in Lakhnaur. Sikhs from far and wide came to see young Gobind Das.

From Delhi, the Guru and his Sikhs reached Lakhnaur after stopping at Rohtak, Kurukashetra, Pehova and other Sikh centres. Saif Khan accompanied the Guru to ensure his safety[14]. The Guru, united with the rest of his family including Gobind Das and Sikhs who reached Lakhnaur by the longer route, stayed there for some time.

From Lakhnaur the family visited Saifabad, Lahal, Lang, Mullowal, Sekha and Thikriwala, before arriving at Malla to see the Guru's sister Bibi Viro. Malha is now in the District of Muktsar. Bibi Viro's husband, Sadhu Ram, had accompanied the Guru during his long tour. Her sons, Sango Shah and Ganga Ram were delighted to see their father and maternal uncle (*mama*) Guru. The Guru stayed here for a month and went on to Kartarpur and on to Bakala. Here the Guru stayed for about one and a half years till early 1672. *Sangats* came from distant places.

From Bakala, as requested by his son, Gobind Das, and also by a deputation from Rani Champa, the Guru arrived at Chakk Nanaki (Anandpur Sahib) in early 1672. Due to the Guru's presence with hundreds of Sikhs and *sanagat* representatives visiting the Guru, the township started growing. The Guru visited Rani Champa at Bilaspur.

The following year, in 1673, a large gathering of Sikhs took place at Chakk Nanaki (now Anandpur Sahib). Such reports of the Guru's ever increasing popularity were reaching the Emperor. The Sikh

[14] *Muasar-i-Alamgir* and the Guru's *Hukamnamas* to the sangats published by Dr Ganda Singh

organisation was growing through the area *sangats*. The *sangat* representatives were bringing in large donations (tithe called *daswandh*, being one tenth of one's earnings) for community kitchen and causes.

Tour of Bangar Des[15]

From the middle of 1673, the Guru started another preaching tour of Malwa and Bangar countryside to strengthen Sikh centres and returned towards the end of 1674. In addition to prominent Sikhs, the Guru took his wife Gujri and son Gobind Das with him.[16]

From Chak Nanaki (Ananapur Sahib), the first stop was Saifabad (now Bahadurgarh) where Saif Khan kept the Guru's entourage for 3 months. Saif Khan had become a devotee of the Guru finding spiritual peace in his company. After Saifabad, the Guru stopped at the place where the city of Patiala is now located and Gurdwaras Dukh Nivaran Sahib and Moti Baag commemorate the visit. The group was at Moolowal about 80 KM west of Patiala for 5 days. Next on the route were the villages of Sekha, Handhai, Dhilvan, Mysar Khana, Pandharian, Alisher, Joga, Bhupali, Khiva and other villages to reach Sumao.

A large group of the Sangat of Kabul met the Guru here after being told at Chakk Nanaki that the Guru was in this area. Next Khiala,

[15]The country north-west of Delhi was broadly named with reference to the naturally flowing rivers of the great undivided Punjab, the land of Five Rivers. Malwa and Bangar are areas south of river Sutlej. Broadly Malwa is the area between River Sutlej and the seasonal Ghagharriver and includes Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot. Bangar includes Haryana areas of Hisar, Rohtak and Karnal. With the exception of districts closest to Sutlej, these were mostly dry regions. That is no longer the case due to the canal irrigation networks.

[16]Gobind Das as Guru Gobind Singh would return to these areas many years later, hotly pursued by a strong Mughal force up to Muktsar. There the Mughals were dealt a crushing blow by a few Sikhs and sent back witout achieving their objective of capturing or killing the Guru.

Maud, Tahla Sahib and Talwandi Sabo which had become an important *sangat* centre due to the earlier tour. People came to see the Guru in large numbers from the surrounding districts. *Guru-Sar Sarovar* (tank) was dug. From here the group went to Batthinda, Sulisar, Bada Pind, Bashoana, Gobindpura, Gaga, Gurna, Makrod and other villages to reach the well-established Sikhi centre of Dhamtan in the Jind district. The Guru returned to Chakk Nanaki towards the end of 1674 via Kaithal and many villages in Sirsa and Hisar.

Religious persecution by Aurungzeb

Emperor Aurungzeb, full name Muhi Ud-din Muhammad Aurungzeb (1618-1707) became Emperor on 21 July 1658. He imprisoned his sick father Shah Jahan in Agra Fort on 18 June 1658 where the latter passed away in February 1666. In the war of succession he persuaded his brother Murad to join him against his oldest brother Dara Shikoh who was defeated at Fatehabad near Agra. Dara was captured later, imprisoned and executed on 30 August 1659. During the celebration following the victory at Fatehabad, Murad was captured and imprisoned in the Gwalior fort on 5 July 1658. He was executed on 4 December 1661 for killing a religious person.

The fourth unfortunate sibling, Shah Sujah ran away from Assam in fear of Aurungzeb and died some time later. Aurungzeb got his sister Roshnara poisoned. Dara's son, Sulaiman Shikoh was also not spared, nor his own oldest son Sultan Mohamad. That is not all, but suffice to say that the ruthlessness of Aurungzeb to grab the throne of Delhi had no bounds.

To remain in power he adopted religious fanaticism of the extreme type sanctioned by those like Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) and his successors of the *Naqshbandi* order. In 1669, Aurungzeb ordered all provincial governors "to destroy with a willing hand the schools and the temples of the infidels and put an entire stop to their religious practices and teaching."[17]

"He destroyed some Hindu temples even in times of peace. In early 1670 he ordered that all grants of revenue-free land given to non-Muslims should be resumed. In 1679 the emperor re-imposed the *jizya* after more than a century of its abolition by Akbar. That this order too was implemented in the Punjab is evident from a document laying down the amount of *jizya* to be collected from all three classes of assesses in a village. "[18]

Aurungzeb's brutality and fanaticism increased as he faced more revolts in the country. In desperation, he looked for the ultimate solution in an extreme form of Islam to convert the whole of the Indian subcontinent to Islam. He started with Kashmiri Brahmins for conversion to Islam with the willing support of Iftikhar Khan, his bigoted governor of Kashmir from 1671 to 1675. The logic was to convert the upper class Brahmins who were at the top of the Hindu caste system, so that others would follow. Iftikhar terrorised the Brahmins and thousands were forcefully converted to Islam and made to discard their sacred threads, the *jeneus*. These were collected and dispatched to Aurungzeb as proof of mass conversions

[17]Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p70
[18]Irfan Habib, Agrarian System of Mughal India (1526-1707), Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1963, 119-20 quoted by Jagtar Singh Grewal, *Sikhs of Punjab*, p 67

The Brahmins seek the Guru's help

The Brahmins, led by those from Kashmir, were desperate. They had seen over the centuries that while they could mislead the ordinary people with Vedic mythology, superstition, idol worship and the *mantra* (magic formulas), the Mughals and other Islamic invaders from the North-West were not impressed by such practices nor stopped by the *mantra*.

However, the Brahmins were well aware that all, including the kings and princes bowed to Baba Nanak, revered as the *Guru of the Hindus and the Pir of the Muslims.* In desperation and unable to invoke their numerous gods and goddesses, they decided to seek the help of Guru Tegh Bahadur sitting on the Gurgaddi of Guru Nanak. There were Brahmin representatives in this delegation from Kashmir as well as many Hindu centres in India like Hardwar, Mathura, and Kurukashetra. The rumours of a delegation of leading Kashmiri Brahmins going to Guru Tegh Bahadur attracted a large number of people under threat of forced conversions to Islam. Many followed the main delegation of sixteen from Kashmir and some other important Hindu centres. Led by Kirpa Ram Datt[19] from Kashmir they reached Anandpur on 25 May, 1675.

Guru ji listened attentively to the pleas of these Brahmins made helpless by their reliance on myths and miracles, superstitious practices and the caste divisions which weakened their unity as one people. He had been well aware of the policy of increasing religious intolerance of the Mughal emperors after Akbar. His own extensive missionary tours taking the message of universal brotherhood,

[19]Later, Kirpa Ram took Amrit and became Kirpa*Singh*, one of the martyrs of the epic Battle of Chamkaur. Also GKS *Sakhi* 28 p78. Footnote refers to Sewa Singh's *Shaheed Bilas* p 60.

The martyrdom

Emperor Aurungzeb failed to persuade the Guru to convert to Islam and handed the Guru and his Sikh devotees to the the Royal Quazi, the head of the Islamic law ministry, Abdul Wahab Vohra and the Daroga in-charge of the Kotwali (police station and prison) at Chandni Chowk, Khwaja Abdulla. Some accounts suggest that the latter was devoted to the Guru and would have allowed some flexibilities, although, not regarding the torture of the Guru which was personally supervised by the Quazi.

According to *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Sakhi no. 29, three choices were put to the Guru by the Emperor, much to the satisfaction of the Royal Quazi, Abdul Wahab Bohra[21]. These choices were:

1. Perform a miracle to show his divinity.
2. Accept Islam
3. Be prepared to die

Unhesitatingly, the Guru replied that if those were the only choices before him, then he willingly accepted the third choice. He condemned miracle makers and he was content to follow the religious path of Guru Nanak. His cause to uphold the right of all to live according to own chosen religious path was more precious to him than his life.

When all other means of persuasion failed, as ordered by Aurungzeb, the Guru was kept in stricter and most uncomfortable

[21]Sir Jadunath Sarkar quoted by *Sikh Misshionary College* p58.

detention in an iron cage at Chandni Chowk Kotwali[22]. He was handed over to the Royal Quazi to be finally *persuaded* to accept Islam or to be executed with his Sikhs. Emperor Aurungzeb had given up in frustration.

Guru ji was tortured in ways beyond description (*Guru ji ko ghana kasht deea jo kathan se bahar hai*)[23]. The next step was to make the Guru witness the death by torture of his dear Sikhs. The three Sikhs were finally given the alternative to convert to Islam. On refusal, Qazi Abdul Wahab Borah sentenced them to death by torture while the Guru was made to witness the executions.

On 11 November, 1675, the Guru was brought outside the Kotwali and made to sit under a tree to witness the martyrdom of his Sikhs. The event had been well publicised in Delhi and surrounding districts. Thousands had gathered there to witness the executions. Guru Ji, having himself being put through many forms of torture in the preceding days, was made to watch the merciless killing of his beloved Sikhs who had served Guru Nanak's mission for many years. The Sikhs sought Guru's blessing. In the true Sikhi tradition each Sikh martyr focussed on the just cause and the true *dharam* symbolised by his beloved Nanak *Jote,* Guru Tegh Bahadur before him[24], and willingly gave his life.

The first to be martyred was Dayal Das. He was lowered into a cauldron of boiling liquid[25]. Next, bound between two posts, Mati

[22]According to S M Latif quoted by DrTrilochan Singh, "The Guru Being unable to satisfy his Majesty one way or the other was by the King's order thrown into prison and on his persistently refusing to become a convert, was subjected to bodily tortures." (S M Latif: History of Punjab.)
[23]Piara Singh Padam, *Tegh Bahadur Simaryiay* p 60 Bhat Vahi Talaonda, Pargna Jind no. 24)
[24]"*Be prepared to give your life before your beloved* [Guru]" SGGS p83
[25]Some accounts mention water while others, oil.

Das was sawn in two as he recited Gurbani (the Guru's Word). Finally, his younger brother, Sati Das, was wrapped in cotton wool and burnt to death as he kept his meditative gaze fixed on the Guru before him. Guru Ji watched and uttered, "Blessed are the Sikhs and their *Sikhi*! Their martyrdoms have weakened the roots of the Mughal raj. This regime will not last for long."[26]

Finally, the Qazi was convinced that Aurungzeb's objective to convert the Guru, and through him the Indian sub-continent, to Islam, was not achievable. True *dharam* was going to be victorious at the end. In desperation, disappointment and shivering with the rage of a defeated zealot, the quazi ordered the execution of the Guru by the executioner Jalal-u-din of Samana[27].

Before the final order for the execution, the Guru was allowed to recite five *Pauries* (holy stanzas) of *Japuji Sahib* and the final *Salok* starting "*Pavan Guru....*", so that when the Guru bowed his head at the end of that Salok, the executioner, Jalal-u-din, would swing his sword.

The Guru recited the *Pauries* and the final Salok and bowed his head. The *jalad* (executioner) swung the sword and severed the head of the Guru from his body. By doing so, the executioner wrote a new chapter in the history of martyrdoms for just causes. This was a unique martyrdom to save the religion of another and for the religious freedom of all. So did the Guru *break the earthly vase* (human body) on the head of the Emperor of Delhi, Muhi Ud-din Muhammad Aurungzeb, on 11 November 1675.

[26]*Guru Kian Sakhian, Sakhi* 30 p83.
[27]*Twarikh Guru Khalsa* p.281

Thus wrote Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak (*Apni Katha 5/2/5*)
"He [Guru Tegh Bahadur] broke this earthly vase on the head of the emperor of Delhi [Aurungzeb] and went to the abode of God.
No one has ever done such a unique deed like that [the sacrifice] of Tegh Bahadur [for other people's faith]

The world mourned the demise of Tegh Bahadur, but there was rejoicing in paradise."

Unable to bear the burden of this sin, the Qazi Abdul Wahab Borah passed away in great agony within a few days on 26 November, 1675.

The impact of this unique martyrdom was profound. It changed the course of the history of the Indian sub-continent, while it became the most prominent landmark in the landscape of martyrdoms for human rights and just causes in human history.

"Since then the Delhi Kingdom became progressively weaker, it is since then that the Muslim [Mughal] power began to decline."
(Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Sri Guru Panth Parkash,translation by Prof. Gurtej singh,* Vol 2, p 61.)

Events following the martyrdom

A huge crowd had gathered to witness this well-publicised epic event. The great disturbance which followed has been compared to a sudden dark storm of suffocating dust (*jhakhar*). By this time it was the evening of Thursday 11 November 1675 when the daylight hours were already getting shorter. The beheading of the Guru followed an uncontrolled surge forward by the huge crowd to take

a holy glimpse of the face of the Guru. A large dust cloud engulfed the scene and the confusion was total. The shocked guards were pushed away.

This is when a brave and devout Sikh, Bhai Jaita, a road sweeper, who had been moving around near the scene with a broom and a bucket, looking for the right moment, rushed forward with the crowd, grabbed the Guru's head, wrapped it in cloth and headed straight for Anandpur.

However, Bhai Jaita's bold action needs to be understood in the context of the earlier background organisation and planning of Delhi Sikhs. First, the Sikhs met at the Dharamsala of Bhai Kalyana and later at the house of Bhai Nanu. The leading Sikhs were: Bhai Nanu son of Bhai Bagha(tailor), Bhai Jaita son of Bhai Aagya Ram (Ranghreta), Bhai Udha son of Khem Chand (Rathore), Bhai Tulsi son of Bhai Bagha and Bhai Dhuma son of Bhai Kahna.

During this time the Sikhs heard that the royal contractor Lakhi Shah Vanjara (trader) and his sons Nigahia, Hema and Haadi had returned from Narnaol with their *tanda* i.e. a large number of carts drawn by oxen carrying building material (lime etc) for delivery at the Red Fort. This *tanda* had stopped near river Jumna where they were met by the Sikhs. It was agreed that following delivery of material at the fort, the caravan would return via Chandni Chowk and the Sikhs would pick up the Guru's body.

The dust and confusion allowed Bhai Udha, Lakhi and his sons to take away the body to Lakhi Shah's house and to cremate it by putting it in a large quantity of cotton and setting the house on fire. Bhai Jaita had already started towards Anandpur Sahib and Bhai

Udha followed after cremating the Guru's body. They met at Kiratpur on 16 November 1675 where Gobind Das (later Guru Gobind Singh) arrived with the family and Sangat. Guru Tegh Bahadur's *sis* (head) was cremated at Anandpur Sahib on 17 November 1675.

Bhai Jaita and later behind him, Bhai Udha, covered a distance of over 200 miles by foot in five days! That makes it a remarkable feat of about 40 miles a day as they passed through dangerous countryside with Mughal guards at the main roads and crossings. Bhai Jaita's deed was acknowledged by Guru Gobind Singh by calling him "Guru's true son".

Both, Jaita and Udha, took Amrit in 1699 and Bhai Jaita took the name Bhai Jeon Singh and Bhai Udha, Udhai Singh. Bhai Jeon Singh died fighting impossible odds at the battle of Chamkaur[28] (7 December, 1705).

End of Emperor Aurungzeb

Emperor Aurungzeb spent most his life either scheming or plotting against own family or fighting wars trying to control vast areas of the Indian sub-continent. He spend his final years fighting wars in central and southern India. He thought of subduing Marwar and finally left for Deccan on 8 September 1681. He reached Aurungabad in March 1682. For 25 years he was engaged in warfare trying to subdue the Shia states of Golconda and Bijapur and trying to defeat the Marathas. He was not able to return to Delhi. He died at the age of 88 years on 3 March 1707 at Ahmed Nagar.

[28]Prof Sahib Singh, *Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji*, P48

He was responsible for the massive destruction of life and property throughout the subcontinent. He managed to destroy own family and the Mughal dynasty.

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Guru Tegh Bahadur's teachings

Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Gurbani* (Guru's Word) in Sri Guru Granth Sahib is in 56 *Saloks* (couplets) and 59 *Shabads* (holy hymns) in 15 classical *Raags* (musical measures). The language is the popular *sant-bhasha* spoken by the Indian *sants* or *bhagats* (holy men and women). His Message is soul-stirring and his unique martyrdom instilled death-defying courage in the frightened and down-trodden masses of the sub-continent.

There is an essential Guru *Jote* (Light) continuity in Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching in the tradition of *Jote Oha, jugat saee* (Same Guru Light - of Guru Nanak - same methodology[29]). It is the same revolutionary message as that of Guru Nanak's 'Game of love' and that of the Guru-persons who followed. Acceptance of death is a pre-condition[30] to full and fearless participation in this life. In *Sikhi*, inner detachment is not an excuse for opting out. Rather it is *raj-jog* as taught by Guru Nanak. Inner detachment from world-play makes a person fearless, and a warrior, fighting a just cause, invincible.

Hiding from oppression and evil is not an option for those who wish to tread the righteous path of Guru Nanak. This was a path which

[29]The same is the Divine Light and same is the method and mission. The King Nanak has again merely changed his body. Balwand and Satta, RamkalikiVar SGGS p966
[30]"*Pehla(n) maran kabool...*" SGGS p 1104

Armed defence was justified as a last resort. Throughout his life, the Guru retained his interest in the use of arms and in hunting while he prepared for the great task ahead – the *Kalu meh saka* (epic deed in the Age of Darkness[32]) - which he was destined to perform in the *Hukum* (Will or Order) of the *Akal Purakh* (Timeless Being).

That message instilled unlimited courage in a down-trodden people so that they proved to be more than a match for the evil empire of a bigoted despot, Aurungzeb. Thus, the ideological foundation was laid for the emergence of the invincible Khalsa, the Army of the Timeless Being.

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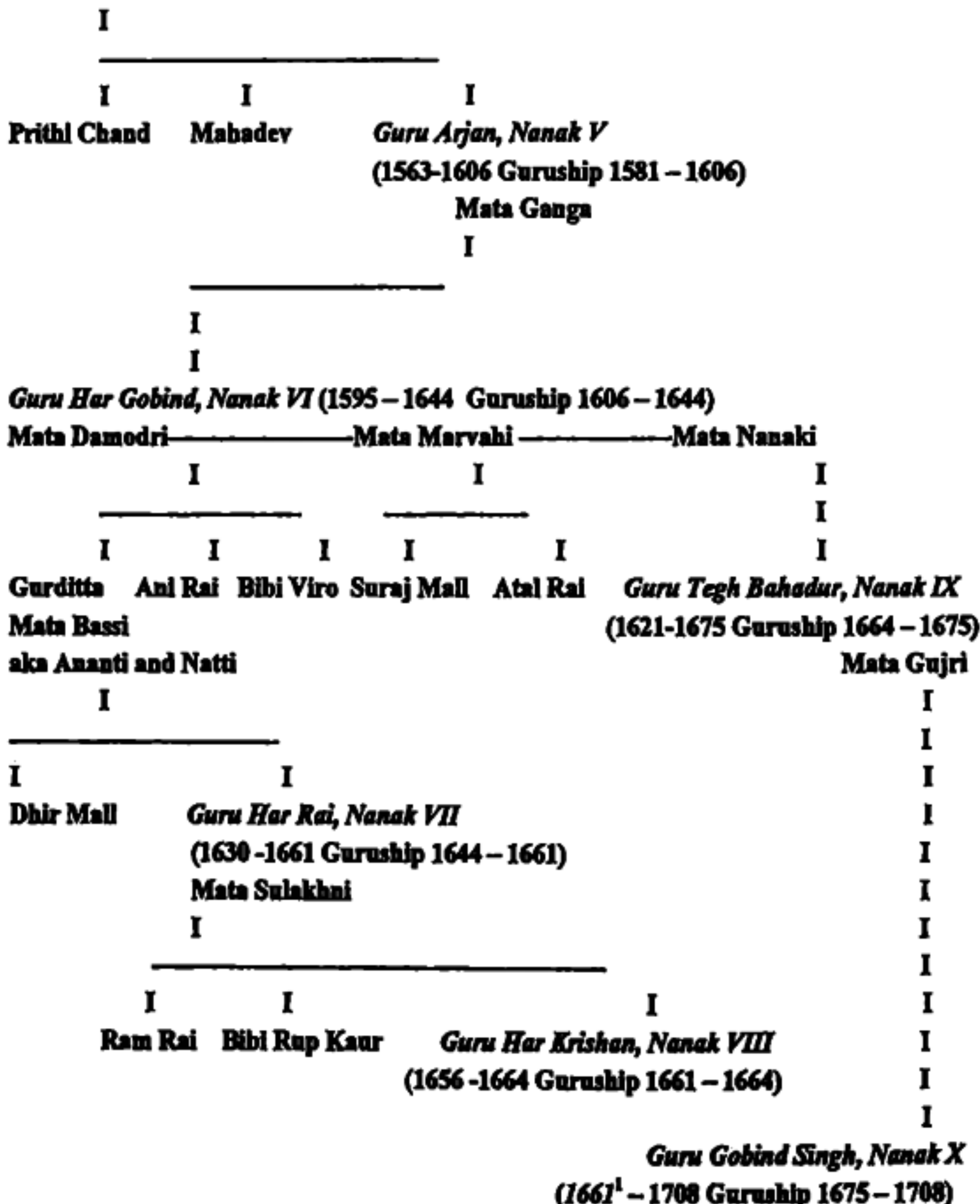
Contemporary Mughal Emperors

During the period from Nanak V, Guru Arjan to Nanak X, Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikh Gurus mentioned in this account, the emperors on the throne of Delhi were: Akbar (1556-1605), Jahangir (1605-1627), Shah Jahan (1628-1658) and Aurungzeb (1658-1707). Jahangir was on the throne of Delhi when Guru Teg Bahadur was born and Aurungzeb was the emperor on whose orders he was executed in Delhi on 11 November 1675.

[32]The last of the four eons in Indian lore.

Annex I : Guruship Succession

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was followed by Guru Angad Dev, Nanak II (1504-1552; Guruship 1539-1552); Guru Amardas, Nanak III (1479-1575; Guruship 1552-1575). Below is a Guruship succession tree from Guru Ramdas, Nanak IV to Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X.



[1] Contemporary source s confirm the year of Guru Gobind Singh's date of birth as 1661 and not 1666

List of Sikh Missionary Society's Publications

A List All these books except marked* are for free distributions to individuals

1 Introduction to Sikhism
2 Guru Nanak (for children)
3 The Guru's Way (for children)
4 In the Guru's Footsteps (for Children)
5 Guru Arjan: Apostle for Peace
6 The Sikh Symbols
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